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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: CODEL MCCAIN MEETS WITH ANBAR LOCAL LEADERS

Classified By: PRT LEADER Jim Soriano, for reasons 1.4 b and d.

11. (U) This is a PRT Anbar cable.

12. (SBU) CODEL McCain traveled to Camp Ramadi in Anbar province on Apr 2 to meet with the U.S. Army brigade in Ramadi and with local Anbari leaders. The CODEL consisted of Senator John McCain (R-AZ), Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Representative Mike Pence (R-IN), Representative Rick Renzi (R-AZ), and was escorted MNC-I CG LTG Raymond Odierno. The CODEL received an operations and intelligence summary of the Ramadi area by the local U.S. commander which highlighted the significant improvements in security, ISF capability and governance capacity around Ramadi. The CODEL subsequently met with Sheikh Sattar Abu Risha, Anbar Provincial Chief of Police MG Abdul Salaam and local senior Iraqi Army officers. Atmospherics were positive, with the Iraqis stressing the want the U.S. to remain in Iraq.

13. (C/Rel MNFI) All CODEL members expressed their commitment for Iraq to achieve security and stability. National Salvation Council spokesperson Sheikh Abdalsittar Abu Risha voiced his friendship and allegiance to the Coalition, adding that Anbaris want the Coalition to stay to train the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). Abdalsittar urged for a permanent U.S. military presence in Iraq, even after the ISF is fully established. Meeting attendees observed that their ties to local ISF were growing stronger and that ISF operational capacity was improving.

14. (C/Rel MNFI) When CODEL members asked how long it would take for the ISF to be self-sufficient, PC Chair Abdul Salaam stated that while the ISF already is quite capable militarily, and will have the ability within a year to conduct effective operations on its own, it will take at least two to three years before they were developed enough to fulfill all their logistical requirements and to be self-sustaining. The Iraqis agreed that if the U.S. withdrew before the ISF was fully self-sufficient, it would be a disaster. Terrorists and/or Iran would immediately return to fill in the vacuum created by the U.S. departure. The Iraqis asked for police and military academies be established in Anbar to develop a professional officer corps. Turning to long-term threats, Abdalsittar opined that Iran was the greatest long-term menace. He also characterized Syria as the &daughter of Iran8.
CROCKER